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**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)**  
**OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

## **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN – Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation Programs**

Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2005

September 30, 2005

### **Background**

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are vulnerable to a range of natural hazards, including earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, landslides, volcanoes, and drought. At times, El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) meteorological events, as well as poor land use management, exacerbate the effects of some of these hazards. In addition, disasters triggered by environmental or technological incidents, such as forest fires, chemical and oil spills, and transportation accidents, pose a potential threat to the LAC region. Some LAC countries are also vulnerable to civil unrest and associated humanitarian consequences.

Recognizing these vulnerabilities, USAID/OFDA supports disaster preparedness and mitigation programs aimed at reducing the loss of human life and lessening the economic impacts caused by disasters. These programs may include risk identification, prioritization, and reduction, as well as post-disaster recovery and short-term rehabilitation projects. In the LAC region, USAID/OFDA also promotes local and national self-sufficiency in disaster preparedness and management. USAID/OFDA's programs build upon and strengthen the capacity of established national and regional disaster management institutions, many of which have the ability to meet most emergency needs after an event.

USAID/OFDA's commitment to the development of risk management practices in LAC is best illustrated through the Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP) established in 1989. Over the years, USAID/OFDA has adapted the program to meet the increased levels of capacity in LAC by changing from a strictly instructional approach to providing more technical assistance for planning, strengthening, and centralizing the role of national organizations in disaster management. USAID/OFDA's technical assistance also enhances local and regional abilities to respond to emergency needs by increasing awareness and understanding of mitigation activities and encouraging intra- and inter-governmental coordination in all risk management initiatives.

The RDAP and other preparedness programs are overseen and monitored by USAID/OFDA's team of five regional advisors based in San José, Costa Rica, and one regional advisor based in Bridgetown, Barbados. USAID/OFDA regional advisors are available for immediate deployment in response to disasters to conduct damage and needs assessments and to help coordinate emergency response activities.

USAID/OFDA supports the development of risk management in LAC through a number of grants and programs. In FY 2005, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$8.3 million for ongoing disaster preparedness and mitigation projects.

### **USAID/OFDA/LAC Preparedness and Mitigation Assistance Regional Programs and Grants**

- **Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP):** Through a contract with the International Resources Group (IRG), USAID/OFDA maintains a network of disaster assistance experts located throughout the LAC region who are available to deploy to disaster sites, perform damage assessments, and provide guidance on disaster preparedness and mitigation activities. In addition, the IRG consultants oversee a multi-course program with instruction in disaster management concepts, training methodology, and technical disciplines. The program also provides technical assistance, including guidance for strategic planning and organizational development processes, facilitation in the development and evaluation of national and local risk management training programs, support for inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, and assistance in the preparation of local, departmental, and national emergency action plans. The program began in Latin America in May 1989 and expanded in 1991 to include the Caribbean countries. Since the program's inception, USAID/OFDA has trained more than 39,300 participants and certified more than 3,500 instructors in 26 countries. Many of these USAID/OFDA-trained individuals have assumed leadership roles in national disaster management organizations and presently conduct training in their own countries using their resources. USAID/OFDA has contracted IRG to implement the RDAP from 1998 to 2008, and total funding to date amounts to \$25,694,654..... **FY 05 \$5,030,493**

- Emergency Health Preparedness Program: Since 1998, USAID/OFDA has supported Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) efforts to promote improved disaster preparedness and response in the health sector. In 2003, USAID/OFDA and PAHO entered into a new five-year agreement focused on increasing the capacity of health professionals to respond to disasters in the LAC region. PAHO is working to increase and improve advocacy, technical information services, and human resources training in health, environment, and all related sectors. Specific PAHO activities include production and dissemination of training materials and health guidelines, support for developing building codes for health and water facilities, and health surveillance for local communities in the immediate post-disaster period. Total USAID/OFDA funding to PAHO for regional technical support in the LAC region since 1998 is \$8,450,870 ..... **FY 05 \$1,000,000**
- Latin America and Caribbean Emergency Response Network (LACERN): In August 2005, USAID/OFDA awarded a grant to the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) for the LACERN emergency response project. The aim of this project is to deliver emergency food assistance immediately and cost effectively in the aftermath of a disaster or crisis. LACERN will comprise one central hub in Panama, primarily for operational equipment to be airlifted or shipped as needed during an emergency, and three sub-regional depots with small stocks of ready-to-eat meals—one in Central America, one in the Andean region, and one in the Caribbean. Immediate food interventions can be mobilized from the depots and reach most locations within the region within one to two days. An emergency management center will be co-located with the hub to allow WFP and partners to share experiences, pre-crisis information, and operational data to optimize the timeliness of responses ..... **FY 05 \$700,000**
- Assessment of LAC Risk Management Curricula – Phase I and Phase II: Implemented by the Florida International University (FIU), Phase I of this project, completed in August 2004, assessed the state of disaster, emergency, or risk management instruction in higher education institutions in the LAC region. In Phase II, FIU will competitively select three higher education institutions in South America identified in Phase I to receive small grants to strengthen disaster management learning through creative and innovative approaches. Since FY 2003, USAID/OFDA has provided \$151,228 to FIU for Phase I and Phase II of this project ..... **FY 05 \$99,773**
- Private Sector Involvement in Disaster Assistance: USAID/OFDA is supporting a two-year pilot initiative by the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) to promote private sector engagement and contributions to emergency management activities before, during, and after disaster events in the LAC region. PADF will help businesses to develop strategies that encourage quick mobilization of private sector resources for disaster assistance. This program will also bring emergency management training to private enterprises, as well as create awareness among businesses regarding disaster preparedness and mitigation. In FY 2004, USAID/OFDA provided \$430,513 toward the implementation of this project.
- Strengthening of Volcano Monitoring Efforts: USAID/OFDA supports the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Volcano Disaster Assistance Program (VDAP) that provides technical assistance to volcano monitoring organizations throughout the world. VDAP assistance includes crisis response, instruction on conducting risk assessments and developing early warning plans, as well as the transfer of volcano-monitoring equipment and technology. In Mexico and Central America, VDAP works with the Centro Nacional de Prevención de Desastres and the Observatorio Vulcanológico de Colima in Mexico; the Instituto Nacional de Sismología, Vulcanología, Meteorología, e Hidrología and the Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres in Guatemala; the Instituto Nicaragüense de Estudios Territoriales in Nicaragua; the Servicio Nacional de Estudios Territoriales in El Salvador; and the Observatorio Vulcanológico y Sismológico in Costa Rica. In South America, VDAP partners with Ecuador's Instituto Geofísico and Escuela Politécnica Nacional, Colombia's Observatorio Vulcanológico y Sismológico de Manizales, and Peru's Universidad Nacional de San Agustín and Instituto Geofísico. In the Caribbean, VDAP works with the British Geological Survey in Montserrat and the Institute de Physique du Globe de Paris in Martinique. Since 1986, VDAP assistance in LAC has totaled approximately \$6 million, with an estimated \$650,000 provided in FY 2005 ..... **FY 05 \$650,000**

### ***Caribbean Programs and Grants***

- Disaster Mitigation Facility for the Caribbean (DMFC): Since 2000, USAID/OFDA has provided \$1.6 million to the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) to establish a disaster mitigation facility in the region. The six-year program supports activities that promote sustainable development through reduced risk and losses from natural hazards in the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean. In addition, the DMFC is working to fully incorporate natural hazard considerations into new development projects financed by the bank ..... **FY 05 \$400,000**
- Disaster Risk Management Program in Haiti: USAID/OFDA is supporting the U.N. Development Program's (UNDP) efforts to reduce natural hazard risks faced by vulnerable populations in Haiti. UNDP is collaborating

with Haiti's Civil Protection Department to strengthen local and national response, preparation, and training capacities and to develop disaster prevention and mitigation projects ..... **FY 05 \$250,000**

#### ***Central American Programs and Grants***

- Reducing Risk and Preparing Vulnerable Communities in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua: USAID/OFDA is providing support to the Nicaraguan Red Cross (CRN) to strengthen the capacity of vulnerable communities in Puerto Cabezas, especially in the geographically and socially isolated areas closest to the Wawa River. The project is designed to raise consciousness on the importance of risk reduction, improve understanding of natural hazards, and strengthen local capacity to respond to disasters. The CRN will conduct information campaigns to teach the residents of Puerto Cabezas of potential risks and will advocate that risk reduction education be included in relevant courses of study at schools and universities. The CRN will also work with the municipal government and communities in disaster preparation activities, early warning systems, and the implementation of small mitigation projects ..... **FY 05 \$50,000**
- Risk Reduction and Disaster Preparedness at Teacher Training Institute: Since 1998, USAID/OFDA has been working with the Juan Demóstenes Arosemena Teacher Training Institute (JDATTI) in Panama to incorporate risk reduction into teaching curricula. Approximately 2,500 men and women study at the JDATTI, under the supervision of 90 administrators and 120 professors. Nearly 400 primary school teachers graduate from the JDATTI annually and are absorbed into schools throughout Panama, including vulnerable and isolated areas of the Caribbean coast and southern region. With funding from USAID/OFDA, the institute will be able to enhance the risk reduction and disaster preparation program by improving equipment in the JDATTI documentation center, primarily through the provision of computers and Internet service and the purchase of specialized books, documents, and curriculum guides for students, professors, and administrators. The new facilities will also enable JDATTI students and faculty to publish original research on risk reduction and disaster preparation. As the number of teachers trained in risk management increases and the subject is incorporated into primary schools throughout Panama, the medium- to long-term effects of the program will multiply ..... **FY 05 \$21,500**

#### ***South American Programs and Grants***

- South America Mitigation Initiative (SAMI): Since September 2005, USAID/OFDA has supported CARE's SAMI program in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru, aimed at incorporating an emergency prevention and preparedness approach into local development plans. SAMI's activities will work to reduce the risk faced by vulnerable communities in the event of an emergency or disaster by developing and testing a set of tools and methods for emergency preparedness. SAMI's objective is to train approximately 240,000 people, including local government officials, non-governmental (NGO) representatives, and CARE project staff in emergency preparedness concepts and methodologies. Specific projects will focus on the departments of Tarija and La Paz in Bolivia, the provinces of Carchí and El Oro in Ecuador, and in the departments of Puno and Tumbes in Peru..... **FY 05 \$88,012**

**Total USAID/OFDA FY 2005 LAC Preparedness and Mitigation Assistance.....\$8,289,778**

**USAID/OFDA PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION ASSISTANCE IN LAC REGION<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Implementing Partner</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>FY 2005 Funding</b>	<b>Total Funding for Ongoing Projects</b>
CARE	South America Mitigation Initiative	Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru	\$88,012	\$88,012
CDB	Disaster Mitigation Facility	Caribbean	\$400,000	\$1,600,000
CRN	Reducing Risk and Preparing Vulnerable Communities	Nicaragua	\$50,000	\$50,000
FIU	Assessment of LAC Risk Management Curricula	LAC Region	\$99,773	\$151,228
IRG	Regional Disaster Assistance Program	LAC Region	\$5,030,493	\$25,694,654
JDATTI	Risk Reduction and Disaster Preparation at Teacher Training Institute	Panama	\$21,500	\$21,500
PADF	Private Sector Involvement in Disaster Assistance	LAC Region	—	\$430,513
PAHO	Emergency Health Preparedness Program	LAC Region	\$1,000,000	\$8,450,870
UNDP	Disaster Risk Management Program	Haiti	\$250,000	\$250,000
VDAP	Strengthening of Volcano Monitoring Efforts	LAC Region	\$650,000	\$6,000,000
WFP	Latin America and Caribbean Emergency Response Network	LAC Region	\$700,000	\$700,000
<b>USAID/OFDA PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION ASSISTANCE IN LAC</b>				<b>\$8,289,778</b>
				<b>\$43,436,777</b>

<sup>1</sup> USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of September 30, 2005.